

Message Text

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ORIGIN EB-07

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P R 060301Z MAR 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 055308

E.O. 11652, GDS

TAGS: ETEL, SA

SUBJECT: ARAB BOYCOTT AND RCA

KUWAIT PLEASE POUCH BAGHDAD

1. DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN TOLD IN CONFIDENCE BY RCA GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS, INC. (RCAGC) OFFICE HERE OF AN INTERESTING CONVERSATION REPORTEDLY OVERHEARD BY ITS RESIDENT MID-EAST REPRESENTATIVE. HE WAS IN THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE JORDANIAN PTT WHEN THAT GENTLEMAN RECEIVED A CALL FROM A PTT OFFICIAL IN JIDDA. THE SAUDI ARABIAN WAS INTERESTED IN KNOWING HOW JORDAN HANDLED ITS RELATIONS WITH AMERICAN RECORD CARRIERS. HE WAS TOLD THAT IT WORKED WITH ALL THREE RECORD CARRIERS, INCLUDING RCAGC. IT
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WAS ABLE TO WORK WITH RCAGC, DESPITE THE FACT THAT IT WAS

ON THE ARAB BOYCOTT LIST, BECAUSE IT HAD RECEIVED PARLIAM-
MENTARY APPROVAL FOR SUCH WORKING RELATIONSHIP. JORDANIAN
OFFICIAL ALSO ADDED THAT IT WAS REMUNERATIVE RELATIONSHIP
BECAUSE RCAGC GENERATED A LARGE VOLUME OF TRAFFIC. IN
RESPONSE TO SAUDI ARABIAN OFFICIAL'S REQUEST FOR WRITTEN
REPORT OF THIS RELATIONSHIP, JORDANIAN DIRECTOR GENERAL
AGREED THAT HE WOULD TELEX MESSAGE TO JIDDA.

2. THIS STRIKES DEPARTMENT AS AN INTERESTING DEVELOPMENT,

AND POSSIBLY AN INDICATION THAT SAUDIS HAVE UNDER REVIEW
THEIR BOYCOTT POLICY TOWARD RCAGC TELECOMMUNICATIONS
SERVICES.

3. DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY CHECKING QUIETLY
WITH SAUDI TELECOMMUNICATIONS OFFICIALS TO ASCERTAIN
WHETHER SAUDI POLICY UNDER REVIEW--IF EMBASSY BELIEVES
APPROACH CAN BE MADE WITHOUT TRIGGERING NEGATIVE REACTION
BY SAG. IF EMBASSY DISCOVERS SUPPORTING EVIDENCE, USEFUL
ARGUMENT MIGHT BE MADE BY EMBASSY THAT TELECOMMUNICATIONS
FIELD IS AREA WHERE IT IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT THAT
POLITICAL DIFFERENCES NOT BE ALLOWED TO INTERFERE WITH
GLOBAL NETWORK OF GOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE SECTOR RELATION-
SHIPS.

4. INFORMATION ON SAUDI THINKING IS IMPORTANT IN LIGHT OF
REVIEW HERE OF ITT'S APPLICATIONS FOR SAUDI SERVICE
PRESENTLY PENDING BEFORE FCC. (ITT'S TEMPORARY AUTHORITY
HAS BEEN EXTENDED UNTIL APRIL 5.)

5. DECISION BY SAG TO EXEMPT TELECOMMUNICATIONS FROM
BOYCOTT (AS HOTELS AND AIRLINES HAVE ALREADY BEEN EXEMPTED)
WOULD FACILITATE RESOLUTION OF OTHERWISE DIFFICULT ISSUES
RAISED BY PENDING ITT APPLICATION FOR IMPROVED AND EXPANDED
RECORD SERVICES RELATIONSHIP WITH SAUDI ARABIA. ESTABLISH-
MENT OF SATELLITE GROUND FACILITIES IN SEVERAL ME COUNTRIES
IS EXPECTED TO RESULT IN NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS BY U.S.
CARRIERS FOR FCC AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE UPGRADED RECORD
SERVICES. AS LONG AS BOYCOTT APPLIED TO TELECOMMUNICATIONS,
POSSIBILITY EXISTS THAT EACH APPLICATION MIGHT BE CHAL-
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LENGED BY OTHER U.S. CARRIERS OR BY INTEREST GROUPS ON
GROUNDS THAT APPROVAL WOULD LEAD TO UNBALANCED DEVELOPMENT
OF U.S. COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY AND INCREASE RELATIVE
BURDEN OF THE BOYCOTT UPON BLACKLISTED FIRMS. KISSINGER

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